



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JUL 20 2011

The Honorable Brian Schweitzer
Governor
State of Montana
Helena, Montana 59620-0801

Dear Governor Schweitzer:

Thank you for your letter of May 3, 2011, requesting a disaster designation for Valley County, Montana, due to severe winter weather and flooding.

The Department of Agriculture reviewed the Loss Assessment Report and determined that there were sufficient production losses to warrant a Secretarial natural disaster designation. Therefore, I am designating Valley County, Montana, as a primary natural disaster area due to damage and losses caused by severe winter storms, blizzards, excessive moisture, and flooding that occurred during the period of January 1, 2011, and continuing.

In accordance with section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, Daniels, Garfield, McCone, Phillips, and Roosevelt Counties, Montana, are named as contiguous disaster counties.

A Secretarial disaster designation makes farm operators in both primary and contiguous counties eligible to be considered for assistance from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. This assistance includes FSA emergency loans and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of a Secretarial disaster declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each emergency loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of production losses, security available, and repayment ability. SURE Program applications for 2011 crop losses will be accepted in 2012, when the 2011 farm revenue data required by statute becomes available.

Local FSA offices can provide affected farmers with further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Vilsack", is positioned above the printed name of the Secretary.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary